

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A hierarchical display of protocol layers for communication data. Fields of the communication data are converted into field cells where each field cell has a text field and a field descriptor. The field cells for each protocol layer are arranged by an interpreter into protocol units according to a protocol standard for that layer and then displayed in a hierarchical manner. Detailed specifications for field cells taken directly from the protocol standard can be displayed by using a cursor over the field cell. Indicators in particular ones of the field cells allow certain field cells within a protocol unit to be collapsed or expanded within the protocol unit or allow lower protocol units to be collapsed or expanded into the higher protocol units.